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

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HOW HE POPPED THE QUESTION,

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the Period; Matrimonial Bliss; Tit for Tat; Our Awful
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HOW HE POPPED THE QUESTION.

—o—

CHARACTERS REPRESENTED.

—

Keziah Ann.

Nathan Appleby.

—

TIME — THE PRESENT.

—

SCENE — A KITCHEN OR PLAIN ROOM.

—

TIME IN REPRESENTATION—TWENTY MINUTES.

TMP92-008775

How He Popped the Question.

SCENE.—Kitchen in a farm house. Keziah Ann seated at the table mending a frock.

Keziah. (looking at the clock) Dear me, I should think 'twas 'bout time Nathan Appleby come along ef he's ever goin' to; I never see sech a feller in my life, he dassent say boo to a rag-baby: now he's a good kind-hearted man an' I kinder like him, but ef he had a leedle more spunk he'd get on better in the world; a kind heart and good habits is worth a great deal, I know, but they never will make very much of a mark unless there is a little gumption to back 'em up; now Nathan's smart in his way, he kin drive a bargain fust rate, but he ain't worth much to court a gal; he's ben comin' here regular three times a week for the last five years, he'll hitch an' aidge roun' an' try to hint that he loves me, but he ain't got grit enough to pop the question like a man, an' he knows I'd say yes anytime. O dear, it makes me mad to see how the other gals git along with their beaux, none on em has such work as I do; most on 'em has got married, and others are engaged, but somehow or other I can't bring Nathan to the pint. I guess he meant to pop tother night, but Rufus Dixon came in an' that scart him; he's awful jealous o' Rufus; now mebbe I kin take advantage o' that and bring him to his senses, if he don't pop to-night 'twill be because I can't make him. There he comes now. (*Nathan heard outside rubbing his feet on the scraper*) Jest hear him scrape his feet.

(*louder*) Ef that's you Nathan, you may as well come in an' not stay there wearing out your shoe leather.

Enter Nathan.

Nathan. How d'ye do, Keziah Ann? so you're to hum, be ye?

Keziah. Wal, it kinder looks so don't it?

Nathan. Yes, I dunno but what it does. How be ye gettin' on?

Keziah. O, fust rate, thank ye.

Nathan. I'm glad to hear that. (*aside*) Jerusalem, I wish I could git on in this courtin' business, but hang it I can't, sure as I try to say a word, my tongue sticks to the roof o' my mouth. (*to Keziah Ann*) How's you marm, Keziah Ann?

Keziah. She's pretty well, thank ye.

Nathan. Has she got over her nuraligy?

Keziah. Of course; you don't s'pose she's goin' to have nuraligy forever, do you?

Nathan. I hope not.

Keziah. Seems to me you're kinder late to-night, Nathan.

Nathan. Wal—yes—I am, that's a fact; but you see I had them pesky cows to keer for, an' all the chores to do an'—

Keziah. O yes, I s'pose you did.

Nathan. Now, its a hefty job to do all them chores, but I hurried roun' an' come as quick as I could.

Keziah. That does for you to tell, but I know some things you think I don't. You went to see Polly Higgins tother night, an' then them chores was done in double quick time, an' you got there early but now—

Nathan. Now Keziah Ann, that's an all-fired whopping mistake; I never went to see Polly Higgins in my life.

Keziah. (*aside*) I've got him now. (*to Nathan*) I know better'n that, you can't tell me. Somebody see you comin' from the ouse.

Nathan. I tell you 'taint true; I ain't ben to Higgins' house for more'n a year, don't you believe me Keziah Ann?

Keziah. I dunno 'bout it.

Nathan. O Keziah Ann, I'm talking as true as gospel, ef you don't believe me, I'll bust with sorrow, I tell ye I never—

Keziah. (*aside*) I guess he'll pop pretty soon. (*to Nathan*) You needn't tell me anymore, I know all about it. I don't think much of a feller that courts two gals at once; now there's Rufus Dixon, he never'd do such a thing.

Nathan. (*aside*) Rufus Dixon! O thunderation! Ef she's

mittened me for Rufus Dixon I'll blow my brains out, I'll suicide, I'll—I'll—

Keziah. (aside) I guess another dose'll fix him. *(to Nathan)* As I was a sayin', Rufus Dixon is a nice young man.

Nathan. To them as don't know him he is, but—

Keziah. Now the more I know him the nicer I think he is.

Nathan. (aside) O hokey-pokey pudding sticks, what on airth'll become o' me! I'll die, I know I shall. I'm sufficating already.

Keziah. (aside) He's most jealous enough I guess. *(to Nathan)* Yes, an' Ma thinks he's splendiferous, an' he kin get any gal in this neighborhood, he's got a big farm, an'—

Nathan. The farm ain't big at all, any gal with common sense kin see its all mortgaged an' there's—

Keziah. So you say; mebby 'tis, but then he's got sech hansum horses, I think.

Nathan. You don't know nothin' 'bout them hosses; he couldn't sell the whole lot on um for a hundred dollars, they've all got spavins and are old as Methusaler, an'—

Keziah. I don't believe a word on it; there ain't one of em got a spavin, I guess I know, an' there ain't sech a pretty black horse in the country as his Bob is.

Nathan. Now, Keziah Ann, how can you talk so, when I've heard you say more'n twenty times, that my Dobbin was the han-sumest black horse in the state; now you go back on a feller like this do you?

Keziah. It's hosses not fellers we're talkin' about; your old Dobbin has had the spring halt for more'n fifty years; when I said that about him I hadn't seen Rufus Dixon's.

Nathan. I wished to gracious you hadn't never seen him.

Keziah. (aside) He's improving. I guess he's pretty near ready.

Nathan. Ever sence Rufus Dixon come along, all the gals' heads has ben turned clear around, an' no sensible feller has had a chance to say a word.

Keziah. (aside) No chance to say a word! He's had five years; how much longer does he want? *(to Nathan)* Wal, I don't know as a gal can do any better than to take Rufus.

Nathan. Now Keziah Ann, you ain't ben an' gone an' thrown yourself away on that noodle, hev ye?

Keziah. Wal not exactly perhaps, but then that ain't sayin' I ain't had a chance; while you was a courtin' Polly Higgins I was havin' jest as good a time.

Nathan. Keziah Ann, you—you—you don't mean to say that Rufus Dixon has ben here an'—an'—that he's—he's—

Keziah. (aside.) He's going to pop. *(to Nathan)* I mean to say

that it wouldn't take Rufus Dixon forever an' an eternity after to court a gal; he'd make up his mind an' pop the question like a man with some spunk; he wouldn't dilly-dally roun' like some folks I know on' who'll sit all night an' stare like a new moon, an' never bint what they come fur.

Nathan. (*aside*) She's a hintin' at me hard. Blame it all why can't I pop now. (*to Keziah Ann*) Say Keziah, I—I—want—I want—

Keziah. Wal what do you want?

Nathan. Now don't be cross Keziah, you—you—you know what I want.

Keziah. Yes, you want a leetle common sense, that's jest what you want.

Nathan. Hang the common sense! I—I—want you to—to—o hang it—I—I want you to—to marry me; there its done by Jerusalem.

Keziah. Is that all?

Nathan. All? Ain't that enough? O Keziah Ann, I've been hankerin' arter you these five years an' never dast to ask you, but ye won't say no; oh Keziah, ef you do you'll drive me to distraction, I'll die of a broken heart, I can't live without ye.

Keziah. Law sakes, you needn't make so much fuss about it.

Nathan. And you'll have me Keziah Ann?

Keziah. Of course I will; I'd a had ye years ago, ef you'd only asked me.

Nathan. O gosh all hemlock, ain't I happy! An' you don't like Rufus Dixon, do ye?

Keziah. No, nor his horses neither.

Nathan. O Keziah Ann, I'm the jolliest man in Christendom; I feel as though 'twas Fourth of July, Christmas and Thanksgiving all in one. O glory hallelujah, star-spangled banner! We'll have a big weddin' with lots of turkey, mince pie and apple-sass, I can taste um now. I'm jest chuck full o' joy, an' all because you are mine forever.

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